

Organism Newspaper Project: Background Information

Targeted *Standard Course of Study*: Goals and Objectives

Goal 4: The learner will develop an understanding of the unity and diversity of life

4.02: Analyze the processes by which organisms representative of the following groups accomplish essential life functions:

- Unicellular organisms
- Annelid worms
- Insects
- Amphibians
- Mammals
- Non-Vascular Plants
- Gymnosperms
- Angiosperms

4.03: Assess, describe, and explain adaptations affecting survival and reproductive success

4.05: Analyze the broad patterns of animal behavior as adaptations to the environment

Introduction to the Teacher

Newspaper projects can be adapted to many topics. I have a version of this project in Genetics and also just focusing on Chordates. This version focuses on all of the groups of organisms that are found in Goal 4 of the curriculum. Teachers could adapt and modify this project in many different ways.

I like to have my students work in groups of three on this project. The positive aspect of this is the collaboration, excitement, and creative synergy. The negative might be that each student does not get the complete overview of information. However, teachers could have all students do the research first and then break into groups and divide up the parts of the newspaper. The project could be done by pairs of students or by single students also. The positive is the depth that each student would experience with the material, but the negative is the loss of some of the excitement.

My students were completely focused for a week of research and writing. The products were amazing. They were informative and creative. One group created a “tabloid.” Other groups were more straightforward. All groups did a great deal of the bonus work. My experience has been that students learn a great deal from projects that involve research and then presentation of what they have learned in a way that allows them to express their creativity.